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ABSTRACT

A survey of 121 principals and other administrators gathered data concerning their opinion of Year 1 and 2 teachers who had graduated from the Primary Programme of the Christchurch College of Education in New Zealand in 1991 and 1992. The survey addressed planning skills; management skills; relationship skills; resources and curriculum skills; evaluation, diagnostic, recording, and reporting skills; and personal qualities. Data revealed a high level of satisfaction in the performance of the beginning teachers. Particularly high degrees of satisfaction were reported in the areas of planning, management, relationships, evaluation, and personal qualities. Areas of concern included resources and curriculum skills. The types of positions held by the Year 1 and 2 teachers included permanent, reliever, long-term reliever, government-subsidized, and part-time. The figures show an alarming drop over 2 years in the number of graduates who began their teaching career in a permanent position. (JDD)

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Employer Survey

The results of a survey of employers of
1991 and 1992 graduates from the
Primary Programme of
Christchurch College of Education.

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SP 035 795

ABSTRACT

The findings of this survey of the opinion of 168 principals (as employers) as to the competence of their Year 1 and 2 teachers who had graduated from the Primary Programme of the Christchurch College of Education in 1991 and 1992, records a high level of satisfaction by the employers in the performance of their recently appointed beginning teachers. In the areas of planning, management, relationships, evaluation and personal qualities, there are particularly high degrees of satisfaction reported by employers, with some concern expressed in the area of resources and curriculum skills.

INTRODUCTION

In the post 'Learning For Life' era of tertiary education in New Zealand, it has become important for each institution to continually seek information from (and survey) its client groups in order to monitor, evaluate and improve the relevance and contents of the various courses offered to - in this case - pre-service primary teachers.

This report represents the findings of one such survey. It set out to gain information from employers of our recent graduate teachers as to the perceived level of competence which beginning teachers were demonstrating within their first two years of employment as classroom teachers.

Some of the data received presented 'historically interesting' information rather than information specific to the performance of the beginning teachers. This information is presented towards the end of this report. [See table 9.]

METHOD

In June 1993, 168 questionnaires were sent out to principals of schools known to have employed a 1991 or 1992 graduate from the Primary Programme of the Christchurch College of Education. As well as data relating to the length of employment, category of employment and class level of the beginning teacher, the principals were invited to write their responses to two questions in relation to the performance of their beginning teacher:

> ***"List up to five teaching-related behaviours/competencies which this teacher does well and which did not require additional advice and guidance."***
>
> ***"List any aspects of teacher behaviours/competencies with which you found the teacher lacked confidence AND which you would have expected to have been included as part of their pre-service course."***

Eighty-eight questionnaires were sent to principals of schools known to have employed a 1991 graduate and eighty questionnaires were sent to principals of schools known to have employed a 1992 graduate. The survey sample represented 53% of all 1991 graduates and 36% of 1992 graduates[1].

[1] At the time of mailing the survey, not all graduates had supplied the College with information as to their whereabouts and whether or not they were teaching, despite a request to do so.

DETAILS OF THE SURVEY SAMPLE.

The response rate from principals ('employers') was excellent. From a potential 168 replies, 121 (70.02%) were received. [See Table 1.]

Table 1: Number of graduates known to be teaching, and return rate of survey questionnaires.

	Number known to be teaching as at June 1993	Number of employer surveys returned	% of returned surveys
1991	88	65	73.86
1992	80	56	70.00
TOTAL	168	121	72.02

While the letter which accompanied the survey questionnaire was addressed to the principal, there was an invitation to have the survey "***completed by a person who has been closely involved with this teacher's induction into teaching.***' Table 2 below identifies the status of the respondents to the survey questionnaire. It is apparent that those declared as 'Tutor-teacher' also hold another category of position, such as 'Senior Teacher', but this was unstated in the return.

Table 2: Position of person who completed the employer's questionnaire.

	Total	Tutor-teacher	Principal	Assistant Principal	Senior teacher	Scale A teacher
GRAD 91 employer replies	65	40	14	2	8	1
% of group		61.54	21.54	3 08	12.31	1.54
GRAD 92 employer replies	56	44	6	0	5	1
% of group		78.57	10.71	0.00	8.93	1.79
Total sample of employer replies	121	84	20	2	13	2
%		69.42	16.53	1.65	10.74	1.65

Table 3 shows the class level at which each of the Year 1 and 2 teachers included in the survey was reported to be teaching.

Table 3: Class level of surveyed Year 1 and 2 teachers.

Employer replies	Total	Junior NE[2] /J3 Aged 5-7	Standards S1/4 Aged 7-10	Forms 1-2 Aged 11-12	Forms 3-5 Aged 13-15
GRAD 91	65	29	29	5	2
% of return		44.61	44.61	7.69	3.08
GRAD 92	56	19	28	9	0
% of return		33.92	50.00	16.07	0.00
TOTAL sample	121	48	57	14	2
% of sample		39.66	47.10	11.57	1.65

FINDINGS

The returned surveys contained a great deal of written information. To facilitate the summary, the behaviours/competencies referred to in the replies have been grouped under six headings - Planning Skills; Management Skills; Relationship Skills; Resources and Curriculum Skills; Evaluation, Diagnostic, Recording and Reporting Skills; and Personal Qualities. These headings are used in the following tables.

To enable some statistical presentation of the returns, each time a behaviour/competency was written in a return, it counted as a 'mention'. In the following tables the 'Mentions' column represents the addition of all similar behaviours/competencies as a percentage of the total sample- ie. as a percentage of 121.

The number in each column of Tables 4 and 5 below, indicates the number of times a behaviour/competency was mentioned by respondents. The 'N=' in the heading of each column is the number of returned questionnaires for that class level in the sample.

"List up to five teaching-related behaviours/competencies which this teacher does well, and which did not require additional advice and guidance."

Five respondents did not complete this question at all citing the recency of appointment or change in tutor-teacher as the reason. A majority of respondents (107 - 88%) contributed up to three 'behaviours/competencies', with 81 respondents (66.94%) contributing four, and 49 (40.49%) contributing five. [See Table 6.]

[2] New Entrants - Children aged 5 on entry to school.

Table 4: Areas employers mentioned as being 'done well' by their Year 1 or 2 teacher and the number of times each was mentioned for each class level.

Area observed to be 'done well'	uniors NE-J3 N=48	Standard 1-4 N=57	Forms 1-5 N=16	Total mentions N=121	Mentions / 121 (%)
Planning skills	44	39	12	95	81.89
Management skills	42	29	9	80	68.96
Relationship skills	29	43	9	81	69.82
Resources and curriculum skills	24	48	12	84	72.41
Evaluation, diagnostic, recording and reporting skills	34	29	4	67	57.75
Personal qualities	23	27	9	59	50.86
No response	1	3	1		

'Planning skills' in this table includes all mentions of qualities such as establishing an effective classroom environment, catering for needs, establishing educational objectives, long term planning, weekly planning, daily planning, introducing interesting topics, displaying children's work, planning to meet needs, and preparation.

'Management skills' includes all mentions of the use of positive reinforcement, control, discipline, classroom management, working with groups, classroom routines, praise, roving eye, classroom organisation, and applying behaviour modification techniques.

'Relationship skills' includes all mentions of effectiveness of relationships with pupils, parents, and colleagues.

'Resources and curriculum skills' includes specific mentions of syllabus areas - including all round curriculum knowledge (12) , Reading (14), Music (13), PE/Sport (11), Maths (9), Art and Art and Craft (6), Language (6), Computers (4), Social Studies (4), Science (4), Maori (3), Outdoor Ed (3), Handwriting (1), Spelling (1), and the ability to seek out/make/provide resources appropriate to the activities (3).

'Evaluation, diagnostic, record keeping and reporting skills' includes all mentions relating to an ability to evaluate against stated aims and objectives, catering for individual/group needs, relevance of tasks to the age group, report writing, evaluating the effectiveness of learning, applying observation skills, and analysing assessments.

'Personal qualities' includes the specifically mentioned qualities of positive philosophy/personal style (23), enthusiasm (11), ability to respond to advice (9),questioning skills (8), professional development. (3), time management (3), and taking on extra duties (2).

"List any aspects of teacher behaviour/expectations with which you found the teacher lacked confidence, AND which you would have expected to have been included as part of their pre-service course."

Of the 121 responses, 28 were either blank, or registered a 'NIL-type' comment to this part of the questionnaire. This could be taken as being 23.14% of the 'employers' registering complete satisfaction with their beginning teacher's skills, especially when accompanied by written comments such as 'Not applicable to x', 'no unexpected areas', 'Nil', 'None', 'Does not lack confidence'.[See Table 6.]

Table 5: Areas in which Year 1 and 2 teachers were considered to 'lack confidence' by their employer and the number of times each was mentioned for each class level.

Area observed 'lacking in confidence'	Juniors NE--J3 N=48	Standard 2-4 N=57	Forms 1-5 N=16	Total mentions N=121	Mentions / 121 (%)
Planning skills	9	15	2	26	21.48
Management skills	5	20	2	27	22.31
Relationship skills	6	5	1	12	9.91
Resources and curriculum skills	27	53	1	81	66.94
Evaluation, diagnosis, recording and reporting skills	20	28	2	50	41.32
Personal qualities	12	9	4	25	20.66
Others	5	3	3	11	9.09
# with No response/NIL	13	8	7	28	23.14

'Planning skills' in this table includes all mentions of problems with time management for planning, setting up the classroom environment, need for detailed (daily) planning, general planning format, pace of daily programme, long term planning advantages, and general class organisation.

'Management skills' includes all mentions of catering for individual needs and difficult, non-conforming children in the classroom setting, general classroom behaviour, establishing routines, noise levels, handling groups outdoors, and setting behaviour contracts.

'Relationship skills' includes all mentions of interacting with, consulting with, communicating with and reporting to parents, and the parents meetings. One was to do with collegial relationships.

'Resources and curriculum skills' includes all mentions of difficulties with establishing classroom programmes in particular subject areas, with creating appropriate resources for these areas, with diagnosis of children's performance in these areas, and with using resources to illustrate concepts.[The specific subjects mentioned are listed in Table 8.]

'Evaluation, diagnosis, recording and reporting skills' consisted almost entirely of mentions of an inability to perform the clerical tasks of a teacher within the time frame expected. In particular, Attendance Registers, parent reports and Record Card completion were mentioned. Also inability to use/administer/analyse PAT tests, to maintain informal

anecdotal records, to complete objective observations of children, and to evaluate their own performance were mentioned.

'Personal qualities' includes all mentions of personal spelling problems, time management (to have a life other than school work), use of voice, developing questioning skills, over confidence and lack of confidence, and meeting deadlines (attending meetings).

'Other' refers to a new set of behaviours consistent with the post-Picot reforms, and which may need to assume a place in pre-service courses. The skills of budgeting, policy writing, Board of Trustee membership responsibilities were registered here, along with 'managing the paper war', mainstreaming, knowledge of the age group, and coping with the pressure and stress of teaching.

COMMENTARY

Comparison of the number of behaviours recorded as being 'done well' versus those in which the teacher 'lacked confidence'.

The respondents were more readily able (or more willing) to list areas in which the teacher was performing well, than areas with which they lacked confidence. Table 6 summarises the comparative return rates for the two questions. Even though the respondents were asked to 'List up to five' for the question relating to 'areas which the teacher does well' and only asked to 'List any aspects' for areas in which the teacher 'lacked confidence', the comparative ease with which respondents identified areas which the teacher 'does well' reflects well on the performance of these beginning teachers.

Table 6: Comparison of number of employer mentions of 'done well' and 'areas of lack of confidence'

Number of comments supplied	Mentions as 'does well' N=121	%age of responses N=121	Mentions as 'lack of confidence' N=121	%age of responses N=121
0	5	4.13	28	23.14
1	115	95.04	93	76.85
2	112	92.56	69	57.02
3	107	88.42	45	37.19
4	81	66.94	19	15.07
5	49	40.49	6	4.95

Table 6 clearly shows that in terms of the number of responses made, the 'areas of competence' by far outweigh the 'areas of lack of confidence' with over 88% of the respondents able to record three areas of competence, and at the same time only 37% of the respondents being able to record three areas in which their beginning teacher lacked confidence. Such a ratio could be taken to reflect a high degree of satisfaction by 'employers' with the teaching qualities of these Year 1 and 2 teachers.

Comparison of the 'number of mentions' for each area of teacher behaviour.

Table 7 reflects a very high perception of competence in teaching skills revealed by the employers of our recent graduates - except perhaps in the area of curriculum and resources where the returns seem to present a contradictory message.

Table 7: A comparison by percentage of number of 'mentions' / returns, between areas 'done well' and those in which the teacher 'lacked confidence.'

Area observed	'Does well' %age of mentions N=121	Lacked confidence %age of mentions N=121
Planning skills	81.89	21.48
Management skills	68.96	22.31
Relationship skills	69.82	9.91
Resources and curriculum skills	72.41	66.94
Evaluation, diagnostic, recording and reporting skills	57.75	41.32
Personal qualities	50.86	20.66
Other		23.14

The comparative figures in Table 7 for the 'Resources and curriculum skills' area (72.41% v 66.94%) seem to indicate a problem area identified by the respondents. The figures seem to suggest that while the beginning teachers are 'doing well' in this area, they also require more support for this area than for any other.

This conclusion, however, must be viewed within the context of complete school curriculum change - with each and every curriculum area being re-written and implemented in schools under the newly introduced 'New Zealand Curriculum Framework' in a very short space of time - which will have had an impact on each teacher observed within the sample.

Upon graduation in 1991 or 1992, each of these teachers will have been exposed to differing degrees of knowledge of the new curriculum content and structure, and will have needed to continue to update their knowledge as part of their continued staff development as part of a school staff. The College of Education pre-service courses have only been 'up with the play', to the same extent as the schools, in terms of addressing the curriculum changes within their courses. As new curriculum documents are produced, the appropriate College course(s) content is modified. The pre-service providers have not been in receipt of advanced information in this time of curriculum change.

Each of the beginning teachers had been responsible for up to four-weeks of full responsibility for the total classroom programme on teaching practice section before they assumed 'full-time' status as a classroom teacher. Perhaps the survey respondents are identifying a need for the providers of the 'two years advice and guidance' required for full registration as a teacher', to pay attention to the need for a teacher to develop skill and ability to mount and sustain educationally viable curriculum programmes in classrooms beyond the four-week experience to date.

While the area of 'Resources and curriculum' is of greatest concern to employers, especially at Junior and Standard class levels, the same area of teacher behaviour achieved the second highest 'competence' ratio. [See table 7]. Within this curious finding of the survey - one which may best be addressed by further enquiry - the subjects mentioned under the 'lacked confidence' responses were as identified in Table 8 and referred mainly to difficulties with assessment, grouping, maintaining interest and variety, appropriate resources, organisation, catering for slower learners, establishing a programme, and syllabus knowledge.

Table 8: Syllabus areas mentioned within the 'lacked confidence' responses from employers. (N=121.)

Syllabus area	Juniors - number of mentions	Standards - number of mentions	Forms - number of mentions
Reading	8	17	-
Written language	5	9	-
Maths	2	11	-
Spelling	2	2	-
Art	2	3	-
Music	2	3	-
Phys. Ed.	2	-	-
Oral language	1	-	-
Science	-	4	-
Handwriting	-	1	-
Computer	-	-	1
Total curriculum	-	2	-

As reflected in Table 7, while the continuing development of these beginning teachers could have a focus in the area of curriculum and resources, and evaluation, diagnosis, recording and reporting, these are also topics which may need to have an increased emphasis in the pre-service programmes. There could also be meaningful debate over just which skills are appropriate to the pre-service setting, and which are better addressed within the 'two years' advice and guidance' settings.

COMMENTARY FOR THE PRIMARY PROGRAMME STAFF OF CHRISTCHURCH COLLEGE OF EDUCATION.

On the basis of the data contained in this survey, and with such a high return rate of the questionnaires, we should all feel confident that the nature, contents and style of programme we are offering primary teachers of the future meets with the approval of most of the principals (or their representatives).

The programme we offer students contains the Professional Studies course so keenly supported in Ramsay and Battersby's report on primary teacher training in 1988, and also seems to bridge the theory-practice gap, a sentiment recorded by Christchurch students in the Renwick and Vize 'Windows Into Teacher Education' (1993) report.

The nature of our course approval system, and the criteria we have established which a course must meet before being taught, seems to ensure that our graduates are equipped to a 'better than satisfactory level' in the competencies employers seek and desire to be exhibited in a beginning teacher.

This is not to say that our continual process of evaluation and amendment of courses in which we all engage as part of our own implementation of the planning cycle can end!

INFORMATION OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

It is interesting to note the distribution of types of positions which the beginning teachers held at the time of the survey. Before 1990, those graduates seeking employment as a teacher would have been placed in a beginning teacher 'limited tenure position' by the Education Board to which they had been assigned. They would have held this position for one or two years, thus achieving 'registered teacher status' if they had progressed satisfactorily in the eyes of the then School Inspectors. During this period of two years 'advice and guidance', or immediately afterwards, the beginning teacher would have been applying for 'permanent positions'. Failure to secure such a position resulted in their seeking 'relieving positions' or undertaking activities other than teaching.

After 1990, with the post-Picot reforms in place, and with the Education Boards and School Inspectorate abolished, the graduating students were required to apply for and secure their own positions 'on the open market' in order to be able to complete the two years 'advice and guidance' required by the Teacher Registration Board for 'full registration' as a teacher. Since 1990, each school's Board of Trustees has assumed responsibility for making appointments to their school teaching staff. It is therefore interesting to record, as part of this paper, the distribution of types of position which these beginning teachers held at the time of the survey (June 1993), nearly four years into the 'post-Picot era' of administration of primary education. The types of position held by these Year 1 and 2 teachers, and recorded in Table 9, are as declared in the return from the 'employer'.

Table 9: Type of position held by the surveyed Year 1/2 teachers in June 1993.

	Total no.	Permanent	Long Term Reliever	Task Force Green[3]	Part time	Reliever	Other	Not stated
GRAD 91	65	37	19	4	0	0	1	4
%		56.92	29.23	6.15	0.00	0.00	1.54	6.15
GRAD 92	56	20	26	4	1	2	0	3
%		35.71	46.43	7.14	1.79	3.57	0.00	5.36
Total returns	121	57	45	8	1	2	1	7
%		47.11	37.19	6.61	0.83	1.65	0.83	5.79

[3] A 'Task Force Green' teacher is one employed by a Board of Trustees, with the Government subsidising the teacher's salary.

If the figures in Table 9 are taken as a typical sample of all teacher education graduates from all Colleges of Education, then one feature of the figures in Table 9 is the alarming drop over two years in the number of graduates who began their teaching career in a permanent position. The figures show a drop of over 20% in just one year, with a correspondingly large increase (17%) in the number of those who began their career in a 'Long Term Relieving' position.

It may be desirable to continue to monitor such figures, and to establish the patterns of employment opportunity for beginning teachers. These patterns should then form part of the advice given to prospective applicants for teacher training, and to graduating students about to seek a beginning to their teaching career after their pre-service course. The figures in Table 9 indicate that the advice must be that one's teaching career is more likely to begin with temporary positions than with a permanent position. The consequences for accumulating the required 'two years advice and guidance' for full registration as a teacher, and the possibility that some categories of position may not attract the 0.2 staffing allowance for Year 1 teachers, must also be considered when graduates, principals and Boards of Trustees seek advice about the employment of a 'provisionally registered teacher'.

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